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Stolen Valor Act protects First Amendment rights while respecting servicemembers' dignity

September 13, 2012

WASHINGTON – Congressman Charles F. Bass (NH-02) praised passage of legislation in the House of Representatives today that will make it a crime to lie about earning certain military honors for profit.

The Stolen Valor Act (H.R. 1775) was crafted to comply with the First Amendment and the recent Supreme Court ruling, which struck down a 2005 law in June as being too overly broad and in violation of free speech. Today's bipartisan legislation remedies this by focusing solely on those who seek to knowingly profit from misrepresenting military honors.

Bass, a cosponsor of the legislation, said:

"The men and women who have served, and continued to serve, our nation deserve our greatest respect and thanks for their sacrifices for our nation. Unfortunately, there are some individuals who wish to fraudulently claim military honors for their own profit. This is wrong, and we have an obligation to those who defended our freedoms to protect the integrity of the honors they earned and deserve. With this bill, we can protect our heroes' accomplishments while at the same time preserving the very freedoms that they have fought to uphold. I wish this legislation wasn't necessary in the first place, but I hope the Senate will join the House in passing this measure without delay."

The bill passed this afternoon by a vote of 410 to 3 and now awaits action in the Senate, where Senator Scott Brown (R-MA) introduced bipartisan companion legislation (S. 1728).

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